

KEEP SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

HOLIDAY SAFETY DON'T BE A TARGET FOR CRIME

THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS A TIME WHEN BUSY PEOPLE CAN BECOME EASY targets for crime. Criminals are aware of this and take full advantage of anxious and distracted shoppers.

Here are some tips from the Bloomington Police Department on how to shop safely this holiday season. For more tips, visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keywords: Holiday safety.

All of the staff at the City of Bloomington wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

- 1 Coordinate shopping trips with a friend if you plan to be out late. Never park in an unlit lot, no matter how convenient.
- 2 Lock your car and close the windows. Lock all packages in the trunk.
- 3 Shop when stores are less crowded. Avoid the weekend rush.
- 4 Keep your purse tucked under your arm – never leave it unattended on a counter or in a stroller.
- 5 Always make sure you're given back your own credit card.

- 6 Teach your children what to do in the event you get separated. Encourage them to look for a police officer or go to the customer service desk.
- 7 As you leave the mall, be aware of your surroundings and have your keys ready.



WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE SECURE INTERNET CONNECTIONS

Make sure the Web site you're visiting uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) or Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) technology to encrypt the credit card information. Look for a locked padlock, unbroken key or a lock on the bottom of your screen to confirm the site is secure. Only submit passwords and credit card numbers on a Web site with a secure connection, not within e-mail. If you're not confident that the site is secure, phone in your credit card information.

EXCELLENCE IN CRIME PREVENTION BLOOMINGTON CRIME PREVENTION ASSOCIATION HONORED

IN OCTOBER, THE Bloomington Crime Prevention Association (BCPA) was recognized as the 2007 Civilian Organization of the Year for excellence in crime prevention by the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association (MCPA).

"We are honored that the MCPA had recognized the crime prevention efforts of our organization," said BCPA President Rick Munson. "The efforts of our volunteers made this possible."

The BCPA is a dedicated group of volunteers who, for 25 years, have been raising funds for crime prevention programs and education in the city. Due to the efforts of these dedicated volunteers, the BCPA has raised more than \$500,000. Their most successful event, "Book'em," has raised more than \$270,000 since its inception 15 years ago, with nearly 100 percent of the funds going directly back to community grants.

Although a large portion of the proceeds go to Bloomington Police Department programs and the Bloomington School District, other community organizations have also benefited from the funds raised. Just a few of the groups who have received money for their crime prevention programs include Bloomington Police Explorers, Bloomington Honor Guard, the Neighborhood Watch program, SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions)/MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) and the Block Captains Workshop.

For more information, call Officer James Caauwe at 952-563-8893.



BCPA Vice President and Bloomington School Board Vice Chair Maureen Peterson receives the award on behalf of the BCPA.

FIREPLACE SAFETY TIPS FROM FIRE MARSHAL GENE DUGAL

REMEMBER TO HAVE YOUR FIREPLACE and chimney checked each year by a professional before using them again.

- Fireplaces should have noncombustible materials around the opening and hearth.
- Vents and chimneys must be installed with proper clearances to combustible materials.

- Gasoline and flammable liquids should never be used to start a fire.
- Always use a fireplace screen to keep sparks from igniting materials in the room.
- Do not leave fireplaces or space heaters unattended.



PROTECT YOURSELF TEST RADON LEVELS IN YOUR HOME

A 2003 RISK ASSESSMENT FROM THE Environmental Protection Agency showed radon causes 21,000 premature cancer deaths each year in the U.S.

Much of the soil in the Upper Midwest contains uranium and radium that continuously break down to release radon gas. Although radon is present throughout the environment, people are exposed to more radiation when high levels are present indoors.

The Minnesota Department of Health estimates that about one in three Minnesota homes have enough radon to pose large risks to the occupants' health over many years of exposure.

Radon is colorless, odorless and tasteless; therefore, a radon test is the only way to find out how much is in your home. The City has low-cost radon test kits available for \$5, along with information on how to

perform tests properly.

For more information, call Environmental Health at 952-563-8934.



MINNESOTA FREEDOM TO BREATHE STATEWIDE SMOKING BAN IN EFFECT

MINNESOTA Freedom to Breathe went into effect on

October 1. This new statewide law prohibits smoking in all indoor public places and places of employment.

Cities and counties may have a stricter ordinance than the state law, but

not weaker. Bloomington's ordinance, passed in 2004, prohibits smoking in workplaces and public places. In addition, it prohibits smoking within 25 feet of entrances and exits, and requires that at least one-half of the seating capacity of outdoor restaurant patios be designated as nonsmoking areas. The City passed an ordinance in 2006

prohibiting tobacco use within all City-owned parks, open spaces, and conservation and recreation areas.

For more information, call Environmental Health Manager Lynn Moore at 952-563-8970, or visit www.ci.bloomington.mn.us, keyword: Smokefree.

BE WARY OF DOOR-TO-DOOR PEDDLERS

CITY CODE REQUIRES ALL SOLICITORS to carry a City-issued license and identification card when soliciting door to door. The code also states that solicitors must not operate between 8 p.m. and 9 a.m., enter a property with a posted "No Solicitation" or similar sign, or use aggressive sales techniques.

